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BRAMPTON CIVIC ON-TIME OPENING ENSURED BY NEW $114 MILLION INVESTMENT FROM MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT

Features Much Larger Emergency Department, 479 Beds, Over 200 New Staff

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is making additional investments to help the long-awaited Brampton Civic Hospital get ready to open its doors this fall, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"We are making this history together," said Smitherman. "The new site will have a state-of-the-art emergency department that will have an immediate impact in the community, accommodating 90,000 visits each year. This will improve access to emergency care so patients in the community will get the care they need, when they need it."

"This new hospital is a crown jewel for Brampton and Ontario," Smitherman added. "We need a big push to make sure that the hospital thrives. I'll be out there encouraging the good people of Brampton to revitalize local fundraising efforts."

Smitherman announced today the government is:

- investing an additional $101 million in capital and $13 million in one-time operating funds;
- maintaining the presence of investigator Ken White and asking his team to continue to provide expertise to support the opening; and
- engaging the community with regular communications on the project's progress through the Central West Local Health Integration Network.

This fall, the Brampton Civic site of the William Osler Health Centre will open with 479 beds, including 62 beds to improve access to emergency care. The total number will increase to 527 in 2009/10, 570 in 2010/11, and 608 in 2011/12. The new Brampton Civic site will also almost double the area's ambulatory care capacity from the current 242,000 visits a year to over 400,000 visits a year by 2011/12.

"The residents of Brampton will have one of the finest hospitals in Ontario this fall," said Gordon Laschinger, Chair of the Board at the William Osler Health Centre. "Today's investment means that we will be able to provide residents of Brampton the highest quality health care available."

The minister also announced that Ken White will remain in his role as investigator to provide advice and guidance to the hospital board. In December, White was appointed as an investigator under the *Public Hospitals Act* to lead a team of experts to work with the William Osler Health Centre and the community to ensure a smooth transition and help make the new hospital operational as quickly as possible.

The Central West Local Health Integration Network, responsible for planning, funding and co-ordinating local health care services, will provide monthly reports on the hospital's progress to the community.

"The Brampton Civic Hospital site is crucial to meeting the health care needs of a growing population in Brampton," said Joe McReynolds, chair of the Central West LHIN. "The government's investments along with Ken White's guidance and leadership will help to ensure the timely completion of this project."

The William Osler Health Centre redevelopment is the largest hospital construction projects in Ontario. Upon successful completion of the Civic site, the community and government will then focus on redeveloping the Lynch Street site.

"This is great news for the community," said Kuldip Kular, MPP for Brampton-Gore-Malton-Springdale. "I know that local residents are eager to support this project that will provide quality health care."

"The new Civic Hospital site represents an important expansion of health services for our fast-growing community," said Vic Dhillon, MPP for Brampton West-Mississauga.

"Our government has provided leadership in building the community's capacity to respond and support this exciting new project to ensure it proceeds on time so local residents can benefit from this new state-of-the-art hospital," said Linda Jeffrey, MPP for Brampton Centre.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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